

Notice for the Virginia Register Vol. 24, Issue 16 to be released April 14, 2008

Virginia Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan

The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality seeks written comments from interested parties on the draft *Virginia Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan*, herein referred to as the *Virginia CELCP Plan*.

Virginia must have a *CELCP Plan* to be eligible to participate in a national competition for federal land acquisition funding through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). CELCP was established through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) "for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses."

The Virginia CZM Program at DEQ serves as the lead agency for Virginia's CELCP. The Virginia CZM Program has developed the *Virginia CELCP Plan* in accordance with the CELCP Guidelines published in the Federal Register (68 FR 35860-35869), on June 17, 2003. The *Virginia CELCP Plan* a) provides a map of coastal areas that should be of top priority for land conservation to protect the best remaining coastal resources; b) provides project eligibility requirements; c) provides information on existing state and regional acquisition plans consistent with the goals of CELCP and the Virginia CZM Program; and d) provides a description of the Commonwealth's evaluation process and scoring criteria to be used by the Virginia CZM Program in ranking land conservation proposals. The three highest ranking Virginia proposals will be submitted in an application to NOAA for consideration in the national competition for CELCP funding. Each proposal can request a maximum of \$3,000,000 in federal CELCP funding and should reflect priorities identified in the *Virginia CELCP Plan*.

The public comment period begins on April 14, 2008 and ends on May 13, 2008. **The plan can be viewed on the Virginia CZM Program website at <http://www.deq.state.va.us/coastal/pubnotice.html>.** Written comments should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments. Send comments to Kelly Price, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, Department of Environmental Quality, 629 East Main Street, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond VA 23219, telephone (804) 698-4260, FAX (804) 698-4319, or email kaprice@deq.virginia.gov.